

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /119 W  
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R 071415Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2502

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0313

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MZ

SUBJECT: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

1. ALTHOUGH FREEDOM OF THE PRESS HAS BEEN ACCLAIMED IN MOZAMBIQUE SINCE THE SPINOLA TAKEOVER, IT IS NOT CLEAR JUST HOW FREE THE PRESS REALLY IS. IT IS CERTAINLY FREE TO CARRY MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW RULING JUNTA AND THE MOVEMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES. BUT IT IS EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT THOSE WHO RETAIN SYMPATHY FOR THE PREVIOUS REGIME ARE NOT GETTING COMPARABLE ACCESS TO SPACE. IN FACT, NO CRITICAL COMMENT ON JUNTA HAS APPEARED, NOR HAS SUPPORT FOR CAETANO BEEN PUBLICLY EXPRESSED SINCE THE COUP.

2. SIMILARLY, THERE HAS BEEN A BLACKOUT ON ALL MILITARY NEWS. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND FROM PRIVATE SOURCES THAT GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN THE NORTH CONTINUES UNABATED, AND THAT THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES ARE CARRYING ON NORMAL OPERATIONS, NOTHING OF THIS HAS APPEARED IN THE NEWS MEDIA, EXCEPT THE USUAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF MILITARY CASUALTIES. MILITARY MESSAGES SINCE THE COUP HAVE BEEN OF ADMINISTRATIVE NATURE, AND ARE USUALLY IN THE FORM OF JOINT GOVERNMENT-HIGH COMMAND COMMUNIQUE.

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3. SUCH A JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON MAY 4 ANNOUNCED ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC COMMISSION FOR CONTROL OF PRESS, RADIO, THEATRE, AND CINEMA, IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD MILITARY SECRETS, AND AVOID DISTURBANCES TO PUBLIC OPINION CAUSED BY "REACTIONARY IDEOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS". THE COMMISSION IS TO FUNCTION AS A CONSULTATIVE ORGAN, WILL MEET WITH DIRECTORS OF RESPECTIVE INFORMATION ORGANS TO CLARIFY AND DISCUSS ACTION BEING TAKEN, AND WILL ISSUE APPROPRIATE DIRECTIVES. FOLLOWING OFFICERS HAVE BEEN NAMED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ARMED FORCES ON THE VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO: MAJOR SOUSA CRUZ (NOTICIAS); MAJOR DIAS DE CAMPOS (DIARIO); CAPT. MAGALHAES PEQUITO (A TRIBUNA); CAPT. ROMANO PIRES (NOTICIAS DE BEIRA); AND MAJOR EUGENIO FERNANDES (RADIO CLUB OF MOZAMBIQUE). IT IS NOT YET CLEAR HOW CLOSE OR HOW WIDEREACHING THE CONTROL EXERCISED BY THE MILITARY WILL BE.

4. ONE-SIDED THOUGH IT MAY BE -I.E. ALL IN FAVOR OF THE RULING JUNTA - THE NEWS CONTAINS MANY MORE EXPRESSIONS OF POLITICAL VIEWS THAN UNDER THE PREVIOUS REGIME. THERE HAVE BEEN LARGE NUMBERS OF MANIFESTOS, MESSAGES, OPEN LETTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC. ALL OF WHICH, ONCE THEY HAVE DUTIFULLY SET FORTH ENTHUSIASTIC WORDS OF PRAISE FOR THE JUNTA, EXPRESS VIEWS COVERING A WIDE SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL IDEAS RANGING FROM EXTREME LEFT (THUS FAR SHORT OF OUTRIGHT COMMUNISM) TO RIGHT OF CENTER, EVEN TOUCHING ON MONARCHIST, BUT NOT REACHING THE FAR RIGHT OUTPOST OCCUPIED BY THE PREVIOUS REGIME.

5. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, THE SITUATION HAS GREATLY IMPROVED, ALTHOUGH THE CONSERVATIVE POINT OF VIEW IS, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, BEING NEGLECTED.  
VAN OSS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CENSORSHIP, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 MAY 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974LOUREN00313  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740110-1070  
**From:** LOURENCO MARQUES  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740569/aaaacjgx.tel  
**Line Count:** 93  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 MAY 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <04 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?  
**TAGS:** PINT, MZ  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005